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SUBJECT: ISTANBUL FEBRUARY-APRIL PD ACTIVITIES

¶1. Summary: During the February-April period, PAS Istanbul's efforts concentrated on addressing press reports claiming U.S. "inactivity" on the PKK in northern Iraq and on speculations that Armenia "Genocide" resolutions in both the House and the Senate were expected to pass. We also organized several events related to Black History Month, including an American Voices duo, a U.S. speaker on African American Historical Memory, and a press interview given by CG Jones. In celebration of Turkey's annual Library Week, the regional IRO delivered presentations to thousands of high school students on "Internet Information Literacy," stressing the need for critical evaluation of internet sites. End Summary.

Holiday CD Feedback Underscores Shared Ideals

¶2. As holiday gratuities, the Consulate General presented to contacts 400 CDs featuring songs by Native American Joanne Shenandoah, who had come to Turkey last year for a number of performances arranged by the Public Affairs Sections in Ankara and Istanbul. In an accompanying message, CG Jones underscored the common aspirations for universal ideals of faith, hope, love and peace expressed through song and movement both by Ms. Shenandoah and the Sufi tradition. She reminded contacts of our responsibility to work together as Turkish and American partners to create a world that is ever more peaceful, prosperous and just. Close contacts appreciated the presentation of an American CD that reflected many of the same musical understandings as the Sufi tradition. CG Istanbul has received over 200 thank you letters, all echoing the CG's call to work together.

Audiences Rave About Duende Latin Jazz Quartet

¶3. PAS Istanbul sponsored a tour of the Duende Latin Jazz Quartet (part of Jazz at Lincoln Center) from February 8 to 11, 2007. The Quartet appeared on February 8 on a ninety-minute popular daytime talk show broadcast live nationally on SHOW TV. The PAO spoke about the background and meaning of Black History Month and the contributions of African-American jazz musicians. The host of the program, a famous theater actress, received dozens of positive e-mails, which she read aloud during the show. On February 9, Duende held a workshop for thirty enthusiastic students at Yildiz Technical University. The group's performance at the university later that evening, introduced by CG Jones, was attended by Consulate contacts and university guests. On February 10, Duende traveled to the near-by industrial city of Izmit and performed for 300 members of the general public. Local TV 41 ran an interview with the group during the main newscast on Saturday evening.

¶4. Duende's concerts and master classes reached a broad cross-section of Turkey, providing exposure to an element of

American culture that is rarely experienced in Turkey. Members of the group were recognized and congratulated on the streets of Istanbul after their appearance on SHOW TV, which reaches a large, diverse audience.

Press Roundtable Interview for Ambassador

¶5. PAS Istanbul organized an on-the-record press interview with Ambassador Wilson for five senior columnists on February 7, 2007. The interview on a broad range of topics, including U.S. policies in Iraq, the PKK, and the Armenian Genocide Resolution, resulted in straight-forward and accurate columns/articles on February 8 in the following national dailies: Hurriyet (circulation 534,000); Zaman (circulation: 657,000); Sabah (circulation: 438,000); Milliyet (circulation: 246,000); Cumhuriyet (circulation: 60,000).

Ambassador Interviewed by National TV Station

¶6. On the sidelines of the February 8 Economic Partnership Commission meeting with business leaders, Ambassador Wilson spoke live on nationally broadcast business/economic channel CNBC-e. During the 15-minute interview, also carried by 24-hour news channel NTV, Ambassador Wilson stressed the importance of strengthening the economic relationship between Turkey and the U.S., and also addressed regional energy issues, the PKK and the Armenia Genocide Resolution.

Press Interviews for DAS Bryza

¶7. During his February 8 visit to Istanbul, DAS Bryza was

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interviewed by one of Turkey's most well-known intellectuals and followers of U.S.-Turkey relations, Soli Ozel of Sabah newspaper. A straight-forward article based on the interview appeared in the February 9 edition of Sabah (circulation: 438,000). In his interview, DAS Bryza answered questions about Iraq, the PKK, the Armenia Genocide Resolution and other key issues affecting U.S.-Turkey relations. DAS Bryza covered similar issues in an interview with English language daily "Today's Zaman," which appeared in a front-page article on February 9.

CG Interviewed in National Magazine

¶8. An interview with CG Jones was published in the February 7, 2007 edition of "Hello" magazine (Circulation: 5,000). The seven-page article covered the Consul General's impressions of Istanbul, her family, and career as a diplomat. The Turkish public, used to a daily barrage of negative press about the U.S., were able to read a very positive article describing the human side of the top U.S. diplomat posted to Istanbul.

PAS Istanbul Supports Magnum Photo Exhibit at Istanbul Modern Museum

¶9. PAS provided a grant to Istanbul's premiere modern art museum, the Istanbul Modern, to cover the travel of American Photographer Alex Webb and part of the cost of reproducing, mounting and framing his photographs for a major exhibit of Magnum Agency photographs. The three-month exhibit, which opened the week of February 12, featured sixteen Magnum Agency photographers who did significant work in or about Turkey. Webb's work in the combined traditions of photo-journalism and street photography drew admiration from attendees at the opening. Robert Capa (one of Magnum's founders), Leonard Freed, Costa Manos and Jim Goldberg were the other American artists represented in the exhibition. The crhme of Istanbul's arts

and media establishment, often critical of the U.S. role in the Middle East and Turkey, saw another side of the USA, and appreciated the humanistic vision of five great American photographers. The Museum founder gave the PAO a presentation copy of the catalog during a small ceremony at the vernissage.

CG Interviewed About Black History Month

¶10. CG Jones's interview on the meaning of Black History month was published in the February 25, 2007 edition of Vatan daily (circulation: 252,000). The CG highlighted the importance of a country's willingness to openly examine and discuss its entire history, including coming to terms with its mistakes. She noted that such an approach strengthened the country by giving legitimacy to all of its citizens. The journalist concluded that the interview, although about the American experience, could also apply to Turkey. The Turkish public read about the advantages of a country's willingness to openly examine, study and discuss difficult parts of its history.

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Academic Discusses Armenian Genocide Resolution with Journalists
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¶11. On February 20, PAS organized a Digital Video Conference on the new U.S. Congress for ten journalists, featuring Georgetown Professor of Government Clyde Wilcox. In response to the journalists' concern regarding possible House passage of an Armenian Genocide resolution, Wilcox stressed the Administration's strong opposition to such a resolution and said it would not stand a chance in the Senate. The resolution, he added, would have purely symbolic meaning with no force of law. Underscoring that the vast majority of Americans had no interest in the resolution and were not even aware of its existence, Wilcox said it could not be interpreted as a reflection of the U.S. population's attitude toward Turkey. Turkish readers of Milliyet (circ. 218,000), Cumhuriyet (circ. 58,000), Vatan (circ. 252,000), and Aksam (circ. 192,000) dailies learned of the Administration's strong opposition to the resolution, and that it would not have the force of law.

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African-American Musical Achievements Wow Turkish Audiences
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¶12. The American Voices duo of Michael Parks Masterson and John Ferguson charmed Istanbul audiences with a lively mix of ragtime, show tunes, spirituals and pop music influenced by African-American traditions during a February 23 program as part of the Mission's Black History Month celebrations. The duo gave a master-class at

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Marmara University for seventy-five students, and performed for 100 contacts at the IMOGA Art Gallery before traveling to Bursa to perform at a concert organized in cooperation with the American Corner. Istanbul's Kanal D cable entertainment channel recorded and broadcast a montage of moments from the IMOGA concert; a two minute interview was broadcast three times on Bursa's Olay TV; and articles from several Bursa dailies gave the performers the chance to associate their work with the rich cultural heritage of America.

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Academic Speaks on African American Historical Memory
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¶13. As part of its Black History Month programming, Istanbul hosted Dr. Gerald Early of Washington University February 26-28. Professor Early gave presentations on "African Americans and Historical Memory" to American Studies students and faculty at Bogazici, Kadir Has and Fatih universities. Students from Bilgi, Istanbul, Halic, Dogus and Bahcesehir universities also attended the program at Bogazici. In his remarks, Early focused on the contributions of African American historians and leaders in shaping African Americans' understanding of their own history. Early's lively presentational style resulted in dozens of questions at each

university. The Consul General on February 27 hosted a dinner in honor of Early for fifteen academics and prominent literary figures.

DAS Bryza Reaches Out to Media March 8-9

¶14. During his March 8-9 visit to Istanbul to participate in STEAM's sixth Energy Arena Meeting, DAS Matt Bryza granted three television interviews (all news channels NTV, Kanal 24 and business/economic channel CNBC-e) and a press interview to English language Turkish Daily News. In addition to energy-related issues, the interviews covered the PKK in northern Iraq and the Armenia Genocide Resolution.

CG Grants Radio Interview to Commemorate International Women's Day

¶15. CG Jones on March 8 granted a PAS-organized 60 minute live interview to Turkey's only radio station targeting specifically a female audience ("Radyo Pink"). The CG discussed the status of women in the U.S. and around the world, stressing the importance of education, equal opportunity in the political sphere and the need to stop domestic violence. The station received dozens of positive calls throughout the program, and the CG agreed to answer several listeners' questions on-the-air. The show's host, Ayse Ozgun, is known throughout Turkey for her advocacy of women's rights.

Air Force Academy Professor Describes U.S. Leadership and the "Transatlantic Gap"

¶16. PAS Istanbul provided a grant for U.S. Air Force Academy Professor Brent Talbot to speak at a March 9 conference at Yildiz Technical University on "Security in a Changing World: Discourses, Challenges, and Realities". After describing the challenges and threats to U.S. global leadership following the end of the Cold War, Talbot's comprehensive presentation offered American policymakers five lessons that were well received by the audience of academics and think tank experts.

Ambassador Wilson Engages Media March 15-16

¶17. During his March 15-16 visit to Istanbul, Ambassador Ross Wilson spoke to three top columnists about a wide range of issues related to U.S.-Turkey relations and regional issues, including the PKK and Iraq, the Armenian Genocide Resolution, Iran, and Cyprus. The Ambassador's comments appeared in the March 17 edition of national daily Islam-oriented "Zaman" (circulation: 650,000); and in the March 19 edition of daily "Cumhuriyet" (circulation: 60,000). Ambassador Wilson also gave an interview to mass-appeal Star TV, covering similar issues, which was broadcast on March 17. On March 19, one of the columnists devoted extensive and very positive coverage on the discussion on his daily talk show, broadcast on 24-hour news station NTV.

U.S. Expert Shares Insights on Freedom of Expression

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¶18. Strategic Speaker Initiative participant Herman Schwartz, Professor of Law at American University, traveled to Istanbul March 14-15, 2007. Professor Schwartz, an expert on human rights and constitutional law, spoke on the topic of "Freedom of Expression in Challenging Times - The U.S. and European Experience" to audiences of students, faculty members, parliamentarians, journalists, leaders of non-government organizations and others. During small and large group discussion sessions and lectures held at the Istanbul Bar

Association, Bilgi University, Galatasaray University, a PAO-hosted group of activists and academics and at Kocaeli University, Professor Schwartz reached over 600 people. The topic was particularly timely, coming as Turkey was in the midst of a renewed national debate over reform of free speech laws sparked in part by the assassination of a prominent journalist. Professor Schwartz encountered lively questions throughout his time in Turkey, and engaged audiences on Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, minority rights, and other controversial topics.

¶19. Professor Schwartz reached a broad audience in Turkey, stimulating debate and creative thought on contemporary topics by providing examples of how the U.S. and countries in Europe protect freedom of expression, but also build in legal limits to protect against such things as hate crimes, libel and slander. Professor Schwartz was interviewed by columnist/law professor Turgut Tarhanli, who writes for elite newspaper "Radikal" (circ. 40,000).

Museum of Natural History Expert Consults with Museum Officials,
Students

¶20. During the week of March 19, Paul Beelitz, Director of Collections and Archives, Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, spoke to a total of thirty-five museum curators and technical staff at the Turkish Islamic Art Museum, the Istanbul State Archaeology Museum and the Topkapi Palace Museum. On each occasion Beelitz created lively discussions among participants on prioritizing collections care and the importance of state-of-the-art storage. His advice on fundraising and creating programs for public education was also well received. Beelitz also had an appointment at Suleymaniye Library, where he advised on preservation of precious manuscripts. He also gave a seminar for graduate students in museum management at Yildiz Technical University. He was interviewed by the elite daily "Radikal" (circ. 40,000).

PAO Briefs Model UN Students

¶21. On March 21, Istanbul PAO briefed fifteen international relations students from Galatasaray University before their departure for a Harvard-sponsored Model UN program in Geneva. The PAO, who served as a U.S. delegate to many UN conferences, discussed - off the record - the strengths and weaknesses of the various UN organizations and the present UN system's dependence on consensus to make decisions in many of the bodies. He advised the students on the various issues they would be working on in Geneva, and provided practical suggestions on the art of being a delegate. PAO also discussed U.S. policy and achievements in a number of areas, including UN reform, peace and security, international health, labor and human rights, and described the important role of the regional and other interest groupings in the UN in achieving or blocking institutional reform and progress in substantive issues. He also described the many areas in which Turkish and U.S. interests coincide in international organizations.

National Library Week a Chance for Outreach in Istanbul, Bursa

¶22. Regional Information Resource Officer Michael P. Huff delivered a series of presentations on "Internet and Information Literacy" to a total of 2000 high school students and teachers from thirty-two schools, officials from the Ministries of Education and Culture, and professional librarians. The programs took place at six venues in Istanbul and Bursa throughout the week of March 25-31, 2007. The events were organized by Istanbul IRC in cooperation with Istanbul Greater City Municipality Directorate of Libraries and Museums, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, Bursa Greater Municipality City Library, and Bursa Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Huff was interviewed by the all-news channel NTV and Hurriyet Daily. His presentation provided concrete, live examples of web sites and advice on how to find reliable sites among the literally billions of choices. The younger teen-age audiences peppered Huff with questions about every imaginable subject.

¶23. Units on information and media literacy will soon become part of the Turkish high school curriculum. As a consequence, the cause of information awareness has been elevated to a subject of

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discussion not only among the youth we reached, but also among the teachers, administrators, librarians and other officials who witnessed Huff's presentation. This program was significant also for the entire it will give the Consulate to our local public schools in the future. Numerous requests for repeats of the program were received, which we hope to fulfill using the same PowerPoint presentation delivered by first and second tour officers.

Strategic Speaker from Federal District Court Provides Balance

¶24. Strategic Speaker Judge Charles R. Simpson III, United States District Judge, Western District of Kentucky, traveled to Istanbul on April 4-7, 2007, where he met with a diverse slate of audiences. The judge was a featured panelist for a conference in celebration of the 129th anniversary of the Istanbul Bar Association, one of the largest Bars in the world with its 22,000 members. The judge addressed the theme of the conference, "Freedom and Security in the Light of Recent Developments", by highlighting how the rule of law and supremacy of court decisions guarantee the protection of the fundamental liberties of Americans. Simpson's presentation provided badly needed balance in an otherwise anti-American discussion. At a reception in his honor hosted by PAO, Simpson met prominent legal figures and young lawyers. In a lecture at Bahcesehir University Law Faculty, Simpson addressed a group of students, academics and young lawyers on the US Courts of Appeal - a timely topic in light of recent judicial reform efforts in Turkey. Judge Simpson's lucid presentation at the Bar Association Conference provided badly needed balance to the frequent anti-American barbs. His visit provided PAS the opportunity to meet a large and impressive group of young lawyers and other legal contacts.

Amb. Wilson Meets with Media April 9

¶25. PAS Istanbul organized an on-the-record meeting for Ambassador Wilson with Mehmet Barlas, Senior Editor of the mainstream Sabah daily (circ. 530,000) and Ekrem Dumanli, Editor-in-Chief of Islamist-oriented intellectual Zaman (circ. 652,000). The ambassador touched on a wide range of current topics, including recent controversial statements by Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, the situation in Northern Iraq and the PKK, and more general topics in Turkish-American relations.

CG Speaks to Model UN Students

¶26. CG Jones on April 11 was the keynote speaker at the International Model UN gathering at Roberts College, founded by U.S. missionaries in 1863 and the oldest "American school" outside of the United States. The group of over 200 students came from around the region, including Turkey, Greece, Cyprus and the Balkans. In keeping with the conference's "Development" theme, the CG spoke about the importance of good governance to good business and sound economies, and urged young participants to pursue careers in their countries' civil and foreign services. She emphasized the importance of "unjustifiable optimism" in leadership, and creating a vision others could pursue.

CG Delivers Speech at Micronutrient Forum

¶27. CG Jones on April 16 delivered welcoming remarks to an audience of over 350 from 60 countries at Istanbul's micronutrient forum, designed to pursue a longstanding (35 year plus) USAID objective of addressing nutritional deficiencies in developing countries. The CG's remarks underscored USAID's longstanding role and praised

Turkish efforts on this issue. The absence of micronutrients, which includes substances such as iodine, vitamin A and iron, has severe global public health consequences: their lack represents a major threat to the health and development of populations the world over, particularly children and pregnant women in low-income countries. Although not a largely deficient population itself, Turkey has taken great strides in fortifying wheat, etc., and addressing anemia in the southeast.

CG Speaks on Turkish American Relations to Academic Audience

¶28. As part of Kadir Has University's "Culture and the Arts" lecture series, CG Jones spoke on April 18 to an audience of 50 students, faculty and members of the public on "Diplomacy in an Age of Information Overload." After describing new challenges to diplomacy in the 21st century, the CG spoke eloquently on Turkish American relations and answered questions for another 45 minutes.

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The presentation was warmly received by students and faculty alike. English language Turkish Daily News reported accurately two days later.

JONES